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The Black Cat

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The Black Cat

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His Good Will Present.*

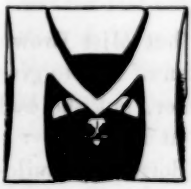
BY MAUD MOSHER.

MY DEAR FATHER:

Ples send me some money. In three weeks is Christmas. I have not got any money for to by present for my teacher. Everybody what has a good will has to give present. I have a much good will to my teacher and I got to have money to by one present. Ples send me some. When I get big boy and come back home to Apache country I tell you and all old Indians about Christmas, and then everybody have a good will and give presents to.

Your loving son,

LOUIE IKOCHE.



MORE than two weeks ago the letter had been mailed to the old Indian father, way out on the Apache reservation. One of the big boys had helped him to write it. Every day little Louie had asked his captain, "Is one letter for me?" Every day the answer had been, "No." The days were so long just waiting and watching for the letter. There had been many times before when he had wanted money for gum and candy, but to really need it, as he did now, was something new to him. The little fellow fairly ached for it, and as Christmas drew nearer and nearer the longing became a positive hunger.

The child had entered the government school during the early spring, so that this was his first knowledge of Christmas. It was a very wonderful thing and the air of mystery that hung over the entire school, the confidential showing of presents, the stories in Sunday school and almost every day in class about the little Christ child, and about Santa Claus, and hanging up stockings, and

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good will to men, and giving things to each other to show that loving spirit, and the star of Bethlehem, and the reindeers and the sleigh, and the wise men from the East, and the chimney, were all in one big but very much confused picture. But with all the confusion shone out, clear and distinct, one thought — that if you had good will to any one you must be sure to give that person a present.

Miss Brown, the teacher of the little Second Graders, was much beloved, and many were the gifts that were being hidden away in the most secret places of the mattresses, in the little nook just at the head and foot of the wire springs, in the lockers, and down under the floor of the playhouse, to be given to her on that night when all should be revealed — Christmas Eve.

Almost all the little Second Graders had some present to give Miss Brown, except little Louie, and he — why he loved her more than all the other little Apaches in the school. Yea, even more than all the Apaches and Sioux and Pawnees and Cheyennes combined. He had nothing to give this lady of his heart, unless the letter came from his father, with the money, for which he had so far looked in vain.

If he had had any other teacher in the school but Miss Brown it would not have seemed so bad not to have a token of love to give her. She was not only his dearly beloved teacher, but she had been his only friend on that dreadful first day at school.

It was not until after he had arrived at the dormitory building, and the other Apache boys, who had come to school with him, had disappeared, and the strange white woman had led him into a room that was all shiny white and had many white things in it that flowed with water, some hot and some cold, that he had become really frightened. He was trembling from head to foot when the matron stripped off his cotton shirt and trousers and plunged him into a tub of warm water. He set his teeth together to keep from crying out as she scrubbed him with a brush and something that made him all white and foamy, like the river in the spring when its waters were high and rushing.

The stiff coat and trousers, the starched collar of his shirt, the many garments, the hard government shoes, were a veritable punishment suit to the little savage child who had worn almost no

clothing in all his short life. Shaken with nervous terror, he had uttered one long scream when the matron placed her hand under his long hair and had lifted toward him the glittering thing that opened and shut like a cruel mouth. One wild leap and he was out of the door, panting, running, stumbling along in the unaccustomed shoes until finally he tripped and fell, blind with tears and terror, on the brick walk.

He could not understand the strange English words, but he did understand the soothing tones, as some one lifted him up, saying, "There, there, there! Don't be frightened. Don't cry, little baby boy." He could not comprehend the language, but he understood the mother voice, alike in all countries and tongues. He understood the arms around him as Miss Brown sat down on the grass and took his poor, tired, quivering little body on her lap. Ever since that day, she had been friend and mother and father and home to him. She was his rock of refuge in a truly weary land, where children went to school and work-classes every day, instead of playing games with the soft desert sand.

She had soothed him and petted him and then had led him back to the matron. She had sat down in the high chair and the matron had clipped off one of her bright, brown locks to show him that it did not hurt. She had stood by his side while his thick black hair had fallen in a shower, and from that day of terror and misery, Louie had lavished on Miss Brown all the love of his starved baby heart.

Christmas came on Tuesday and it was the Friday before. Lessons, for the week, were completed and story-time had come. Jamie Lone Wolf had finished his work before the rest of the class and had been rewarded for his industry by being allowed to look at the pictures in teacher's big book, that only very good children were allowed to handle. One of the pages had held his attention for a long time. It was a picture of *The Shepherds on the Hills.*

"Is any of them mens Indians, teacher?"

"No, dear, their faces are dark because they live in a warm country, but they are not Indians."

Louie came and looked over Jamie's shoulder.

"They looks just like Indians and the hills looks like Apache

country. Winter time Apaches they sits out on hills, and don't wear any overcoats, and not hardly any clothes, 'cause it's warm country, too. Teacher, they don't never tell us 'bout the little baby that lives in cow barn and the stars that walks in the sky and tells the mans where to go." The Babe in the manger had been wonderfully interesting to Louie, and his voice was earnest as he asked, "Miss Brown, why don't Apaches know 'bout Christmas?"

"That is one of the things that you come to school to learn, Louie boy, and when you go back home you can tell all the old Indians about the wonderful story of Christmas. You must tell them too that we show our love and good will to each other by giving gifts and that Christmas is the good will day."

"Teacher, you say that God gives us one baby so that we know that he have a much good will to us, but, sometimes, that ain't a very nice present, 'cause babies they bark all time—"

"Cry, Jamie, cry! Babies don't bark, it is little dogs that bark; babies cry."

"Sometimes babies make a loud much cry and I hope Santa Claus don't give me no baby in Christmas tree. Me, I wants a pistol what shoots. Do you think Santa Claus brings me one play like pistol, teacher?"

"Jamie, if you get one baby on tree you give that baby to me and if I get pistol I give it to you." Daisy Prairie Flower was the devoted admirer of the Superintendent's newest baby. "I could to do that, couldn't I, teacher?"

Before Miss Brown could answer Louie's hand eagerly clutching at her arm claimed her attention. Here was a way out of his difficulty. Miss Brown had said that Santa Claus brought presents to good children and he had been trying so hard to be good, his name had been on the honor roll for six weeks now. "I ain't got any presents an' I ain't got no money to buy any good will present an' I want to. If I get one present on tree could I give it to somebody, what I got a very big good will to?"

The sad little heart bounded with hope, but the eager brown face fell again as his beloved replied, softly, "Why, no, mannie, when you get a Christmas present you do not give it away, you keep it for yourself."

Many of the pupils at the school had parents who had been school boys and girls years before. They understood what Christmas at the Indian school would mean to the child who neither received nor could give in the customary manner. Others of the pupils, having passed through other Christmases at the schools had made preparation long before. Some of the older students had worked on farms or in households during the summer vacation, and had returned to school, in the fall, with some money in the bank, so that the Christmas spirit was manifested very actively throughout the school.

Plans had been made in such a way that the teachers were sure that Santa Claus would not forget a single child this year, so the good will story had been told with even more than its usual emphasis. They never dreamt that some of the children were troubled because they could not give as well as receive.

Louie could scarcely believe his eyes when, the next morning, a letter was handed to him by his captain. "Here's that letter, pie-face, that you've been looking for so long. Want me to read it for you?" He had given up in despair and now it had come — a letter from his father. Would it have money in it for him? The agency interpreter, a returned student, had written for the poor, unlettered parent.

DEAR LOUIE:

Your father says to tell you that he has no money and cannot send you any. He says for you to be a good boy and mind your teacher, and learn to live like white man, and by and by come home and he will be glad to see you. Your father says to tell you that he is sorry in his heart that he has no money to send you. I send you five cents of my money and I wish you a merry Christmas. Write and tell me that you get the money please, and tell me what you do at the school, and did you have a tree.

Your friend,

ISAAC SPOTTED HORSE.

There it was, the little five-cent piece, wrapped in many turnings of paper. The first money he had ever owned, and all of it he could spend for a present for his beloved teacher. His heart danced, now he could show her that he had a good will to her, like she told of in the story.

When he asked his matron for permission to go to town he was told that he might go if he would stay with Jo Arms, one of the Normal Training students, who had volunteered to take twelve of the children on a shopping tour.

"Now, little folks, you may go anywhere in this store that you want to, but you must not go out of the door without me. Before you buy anything or give any of your money, you must let me see what you are buying, and that you pay right for it." Jo, or "Miss Jo," as she was always called, on account of her rank as a Normal Training student, had taken little folks on shopping excursions before.

Louie found the store a most puzzling place. He had known that money would buy almost anything, but now it seemed that there were different kinds of money: five cents money, ten cents money, six dollars money, and so on. When he pointed to things, beautiful things in the show cases, and offered his five cents money, the ladies would shake their heads and say, "Two dollars, four dollars," or something like that.

"Miss Jo, I want to buy a good will present to give for a lady on the Christmas day, an' I got five cents money." Jo took the child over to the five cents counter. "Here is the place where the things are that cost five cents. Anything on this table you can buy for the lady, but I think that I would not buy a mouth organ, or a horn, or anything that makes a noise. Ladies don't like noisy things much. Buy something pretty, that is what ladies like for Christmas presents."

"Do you think this would be a good present to a lady what I got a much good will to?" The clerk at the counter was interestedly watching two other little Indians selecting gifts. Scarcely noticing what the child held in his hand she said, "Yes, I think the lady will surely like that very much."

On the long walk home he showed the present to Miss Jo. She carefully rewrapped it and patted him on the head as she said, "You're a dear boy, Louie. Who is the present for?"

Up in the dormitory, after supper, he had feasted his eyes upon the red roses intertwined with white lilies. Two doves held blue ribbons in their beaks, from which swung a basket filled with more flowers of various hues. Underneath was a long scroll with printing in beautiful blue letters, big letters, and more printing in smaller letters.

He spelled the words out carefully. Some of them he understood very well, but the long hard ones he could not read. With

a sigh he turned again to the contemplation of the flowers and the doves. "I was 'fraid that I wouldn't have any present to give my teacher. Then she would think that I didn't have a good will to her. Maybe she would think some other boy have a more good will than I have."

It was Christmas Eve, just half past six, when the primary pupils, hiding queer shaped packages under jackets and skirts, marched over to the schoolhouse. Miss Brown was in her own schoolroom, waiting for the little Second Graders. When the order came they would march into the assembly room together.

"We have to wait a few minutes before we can see Santa Claus. He seems to be a little late, but we expect him every minute. Shall I tell you a story while we are waiting?"

All eyes turned to Jamie. He was to begin. He had given a present once before, he knew how to do it. All the rest of the Second Graders had arranged to watch Jamie and do and say, as nearly as they could, just what he did and said. Miss Brown little knew what was to befall her in the next few minutes.

Jamie turned as red as his brown skin would let him, half rose to his feet, sat down again, and when the boy behind punched him good and hard, rose, stumbled forward and deposited on his teacher's desk a package slightly wrapped in paper. "Miss Brown, I got a present for you and I wish you a merry Christmas."

"Why, Jamie, Jamie, what a lovely present! I've wanted some real Indian moccasins so very much. Thank you and I wish you a very merry Christmas, too." Teacher little knew the real sacrifice it meant to Jamie. They were his most cherished possession, beaded and sent to him by his mother for his own Christmas present. Government shoes were very hard and rough to tender feet used to the soft deer-hide moccasins.

Evidently the pupils all knew their teacher's passion for collecting Indian curios, for soon, as one child after another timidly laid their offerings of love on her desk, she had indeed a most curious collection.

"My father, he sends me this cane that I should give it to my teacher, and I wish you a very merry Christmas." Mary Eagle, a Crow Creek Sioux girl, laid in Miss Brown's hand one of the rare ring-willow sticks, straight and long, polished and shining,

wreathed at regular intervals with the strange rings of white.

Harriet Beecher Stowe, a swarthy, stocky, little Pima girl, whose first teacher, out on the reservation, had been unable to translate the gutteral accents of the Pima language, and so had given her a new name, came timidly forward, "I gives you, my teach, one doll, so you knows I have a good will to you and I glad you teacher us to live like white people, all time, and curl our hair and ever'thing. I wish you one merry Christmas."

"I shall love your dolly, very much, Harriet. I thank you, but sometimes you must nurse it for a while, so that the dolly won't be lonesome for its own mother." Miss Brown smiled tenderly at the earnest little brown face, as she carefully laid the pottery doll, so absolutely hideous to the sight, but so beautiful to the little mother, on her desk.

One after another they came, laying their Indian curios, their china vases, bottles of perfume, cups and saucers, and the handkerchiefs they had made, at the feet of the teacher who was to them mother and father, teacher and best friend, in the far country where they sojourned while they learned the ways of the conqueror who had despoiled them of their lands and driven them from their ancient homes.

Impatiently they waited for the signal to march into the assembly room where the wonderful tree beckoned them. "Teacher, you think Santa Claus sure to come this night?" The time was long to Sarah. "Maybe he got go so many white people's houses he never come to this Indian school — maybe he no have time."

"I'm sure he'll come to-night. Wait patiently a few minutes longer, children, and everybody come look at my presents, they are so pretty and I love them so much."

At the last moment Harry Pawnee's certainty that his gift was appropriate and much to be desired had become an almost overwhelming uncertainty. Twice he had come to his teacher's desk to present it. Twice he had faltered, with the "merry Christmas" unsaid. Not only were the ways of the white man, also the white woman, so difficult to understand, but the English was so hard to speak. Had he been a warrior and had he brought home the present he was now trying to decide to present his teacher with, he knew that he would be received with much re-

joicing. Since he could remember, his gift had always had the place of honor in the teepee. Many years ago his grandfather had brought it home.

"What have you, Harry, dear?"

"I — gives — to you my present, teacher. I wishes you a merry Christmas. I hopes you like my present. My mother, if I gives it to her, she hangs it up in teepee. I don't know what white ladies do with them. One day, at the town, in store window, I seen lady doll, an' you was lookin' at window, an' they have lots of hairs in window. And teacher, I hear you say you wishes you had a lots of money an' you buys you some hairs, too, 'cause you likes to have more hairs on your head. Teacher, I thinks you got awful pretty hairs on your head now, but — I thinks — maybe — you likes more hairs you likes my present." Poor Harry, he had never made such a long speech in his life before. The perspiration stood out in great drops on his forehead, as he finished and laid his gift, done up in white tissue paper, in his teacher's hand.

A relic, truly, from the old days of savage warfare — the long black scalp lock, that the child had so timidly presented, hoping it was the "hairs" his teacher was wanting. It took a moment for Miss Brown to control her impulse to shudder, another to say, "Thank you, little man, I'll be glad to have your present. I couldn't wear it on my head because my hair is brown and this is black, you see, but I will keep it with the others of my Indian things. Now the Indians will all go to school and not kill each other any more and not take the scalp lock. You know that if we have Christmas and keep the good will spirit we will love each other and not have any more wars."

"Santa Claus has sent a telegram that he has been delayed in getting here but will arrive in a few minutes now," announced the principal teacher, Mr. Willis, at the door. Then whispering so that none but Miss Brown could hear, "The tree took fire from the candles and we had to get it in shape again."

Louie, the little Apache, lingered near the desk. "Well, old man, what you got? A present for your teacher, too?" as Mr. Willis surveyed the curious collection of good will offerings on the desk in front of him. Louie nodded, overcome by the desire

to say the right thing, his love for the dear teacher, and the dreadful English that was always so lost whenever he wished to say anything really important.

"Now, Mr. Willis, don't tease my child. He'll speak when he's all ready, won't you, Louie?"

"Teacher," desperately, "I bought down to the town one present for you 'cause I got a much good wills to you. I thinks it is a much all right present. Then I showed it to Miss Jo, that one big Indian girls what takes us to the store, and now I don't know if it is all right and I thinks it is very pretty."

"I am sure it is all right, dear, and that I shall like it very much indeed. What did Miss Jo say?"

"She says it all right present but I couldn't give it just to a lady, that it has to be given to a lady and a mans too. And I don't know what mans to give it to. I don' know how I could give it to a mans and to you, too? Miss Jo says you would know what mans is the right one, but she says you have to give it to the mans what you have the muchest good wills to and I think good will means same like love."

"What else did Miss Jo say, Louie?"

"She says — she says — that you would know what mans is the right one an' you would know how to give it to him. An' — an' — I wish you a merry Christmas."

Teacher unrolled the present carefully until the splendor of the red roses and the white lilies and the doves burst on her view. "Miss Jo says here is the place to write your name and this is the place to write name of mans whats its his present too. What mans you have write his name there, Miss Brown?"

Miss Brown's blushing face grew rosy red as the principal said, "I think mine would be all right, don't you, Louie boy? Then I could have the beautiful present, too."

"Yes, sir, I think your name would be good one. Miss Jo said she thought maybe you'd like it, only she laughs and I didn't know if she really means it or not. Would Mr. Willis be good man to have the present with you and write his name there where the birds is 'long with your name, teacher, 'cause you could have the mans you want."

"You're right there, old man —"

"Santa Claus has come. He is tying the reindeers now out in the road by the office, so all you children want to come into the assembly room." Miss Jo threw open the door, as she made the announcement. Her laughing eyes danced more merrily as she glanced from Louie's earnest face to Miss Brown's blushing one.

"You haven't answered Louie's question and I'm still waiting to know if I'm going to own the present with you, dearest?" whispered Mr. Willis, as the pupils crowded toward the door.

"Maybe," murmured the Second Grade teacher, as she hid Louie's present on her desk.

"But you didn't say you likes, teacher, and I thought the flowers so pretty and the birds —" the disappointed childish voice sank to a whisper as the tears came into the solemn eyes.

"I think it's just lovely, boy blue, it's just what I want — ah — just — what I need — I — I thank you very much and I wish you a merry Christmas. Now run quickly and see Santa Claus with the other children." Miss Brown hugged the little fellow closely to her for a moment, then led him to the door.

After the Christmas tree was over and Santa Claus was gone Louie was so excited and happy that he could not sleep for long — most a half hour. "My teacher, she has such a good wills to me, and Mr. Willis he has a good wills to me an' he has much good wills to teacher, too — an' — Santa Claus — he — awful — nice m-a-n-s." The black eyes closed, but he roused himself once more to take a last happy toot on his tiny tin horn, muffled under the heavy government blankets.

It seemed to take Miss Brown some time to put her desk in order and to lock it, but when she finally looked up the principal teacher was still waiting. The last child had left the room as he took the teacher with "the pretty hairs" in his arms, as he whispered, "It is a lovely present, dear. We'll frame it and hang it up in the living-room. When shall we have the chaplain fill in our names? A marriage certificate with roses and doves and two hands clasped gives such a homey air when hung over the fireplace. Don't you think so too, sweetheart teacher?"

A Strip of Cardboard.*

BY RUSSELL PETTIS ASKUE.

EAUTY is not always a quality inherent. The barren hill is ugly till glorified by the resplendent rays of the setting sun. The crude decoration on a meal ticket, viewed through the eyes of hunger, becomes artistic, beautiful (one might even say tasteful, and be guiltless of anti-climax). Dost thou worship the god of chance, then to thee the spots on a poker chip are fair as the freckles on the cheek of thy beloved. Dost thou enjoy church socials — then art thou unlike Jack Smith.

Mr. Smith was in the bath-tub, splashing vigorously and whistling. The night before he had sat up until one with Professor Gucker's "Hypothetical Nebular Analysis" and a pony; to-night he was planning to enjoy Harvey J. O'Higgins and a pipe. Wherefore he whistled while he splashed. And pink teas and ladies' sewing circles and church socials were far from his thoughts.

There came a rap at the door and a voice called his name. It was the voice of Mrs. Thompson, mother of his roommate, and it bade him be quiet a minute. "We want you to come to the church to-night," it said; "we're giving a little entertainment, and —"

"O shucks!" he muttered, and began to splash more loudly than ever. But the voice, undaunted, waited patiently for comparative silence, and continued:

"I have tickets for you and George; here's yours, I'm going to put it under the door."

"But, Mrs. Thompson, I really — O all right, I'll go, of course. I suppose you'd keep me in here all night if I didn't promise."

"That's a nice boy, I knew you'd want to come; of course I would if you didn't promise; now remember, dear." And the voice and Mrs. Thompson hurried away, while Jack, too dejected

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to splash, too angry to whistle, sat in the tub and glared at the floor.

He spied the ticket, and picking it up with a wet hand studied it with disfavor. He also made some very unkind remarks concerning it, finally throwing it into a corner.

Yet it was only a little strip of cardboard with nine very proper words neatly printed thereon:

MONTHLY SOCIAL
OF
THE LADIES' AID SOCIETY
Admit One

To an ear accustomed to the English which thrives in Ohio the variety cultivated in New England is amusing, and that imported from the British Isles is funny. But the luxuriant native growth of the sunny Southland is charming.

Miss Dorothy Tyler was from the South, and the words of her mouth were quaint and delightful. She stood in the lecture-room of a church in Cleveland, the vivacious center of an admiring circle of men. During a lull in the conversation she found herself looking up into the steady blue eyes of an athletic young man, and heard some one mumble an introduction. But during the process the gentleman's name became hopelessly lost. So she asked him for it.

He bent toward her and informed her very solemnly —"Jack Smith."

The girl threw back her head and laughed, a wonderful laugh of irrepressible merriment; a laugh that rose exultantly from a sweet murmur to an ecstatic crescendo — the very spirit of animated music.

"Really, Mr. Smith, you must forgive me," she said, touching her handkerchief to her mirth-dimmed eyes; "but it was so funny, the way you said your name. You were so serious about it."

"I'm usually considered funny when I try to be serious. And of course I'm serious upon the question of names. But I'm glad you were laughing at me instead of at 'Smith'."

"But perhaps I wasn't," she answered. "Anyway, 'what's in a name?'"

"That all depends. In mine there seems to be rich material

for the wagging tongues of a thousand jesters. And the thousandth man expects me to laugh at his aged joke — old as the honest name itself."

Again she laughed, deliciously, mischievously; which was exactly what young Mr. Smith desired. By several strategic manœuvers he had led her to a seat, so that he might enjoy that laugh all by himself. And the admiring circle, not being able to exist without a center, had broken up in confusion. Other groups were also dispersing, and the people were seating themselves about the room, in preparation for the formal entertainment of the evening.

A stately blonde standing beside the piano demonstrated her skill in the manipulation of a high-power soprano biplane, whose movements, however, were somewhat hampered by the lowness of the ceiling. And then Mrs. Thompson announced that the company would be further entertained with some readings given by Miss Dorothy Tyler, of Louisville, Kentucky, who had kindly consented, etc.

Miss Dorothy Tyler, with an amused twinkle in her eye, observed the surprise on the face of Mr. Jack Smith; then arose in answer to the welcome that greeted her.

And he — he forgot to be bored, forgot that there was any one but himself listening to this bewitching, black-haired beauty. Breathless, all ears and eyes, he hung upon every word, delighted in every gesture.

Again and again the girl responded to enthusiastic encores, until finally she begged for rest. "It's just dear of you people to be so kind and appreciative, but I'm most awfully tired now. Please let this be the last one; it's about Molly and Jimmy Baker, and mamma has tucked them into their two little beds, and kissed them good-night. So you mustn't make any noise when I get through, 'cause you might disturb them."

And then she took the part of little Molly, listening, in the dark bedroom; also of bold little Jimmy, frightening Molly with a story of a big, fierce lion.

During the reading she cried out, in the terror-stricken lisp of little Molly, "Jimmy, Jimmy, what's that over in the corner?" Pausing an instant for Jimmy's answer, her eyes fell upon young

Mr. Smith. And so absorbed was he that he hunched up his shoulders and roared. His vocal effort was a good imitation of the terrifying challenge of the king of beasts. On a lonely desert, or in the dark bedroom, it would have inspired unspeakable dread; but here, in the brightly lighted church, its effect was otherwise.

Everybody heard the noise, and everybody roared — with laughter. Even the girl's quick answer for Jimmy could not save the situation. Poor Jack! A burning crimson mounted swiftly to his cheeks and enveloped his ears. And ere the first poignant pain of embarrassment had passed the reading was ended. People on all sides were rising to their feet, expressing their pleasure in a storm of applause.

Jack stood in misery by his chair, his legs begging him to run, his judgment commanding him to remain. And George Thompson, agrin with glee, patted him on the back. "O, I say, old man," he laughed, "don't look so sheepish; you're a lion, you know."

Then the girl, hurrying from the platform through the congratulating crowd, stood before him. "Oh, it was perfectly splendid of you to come to my rescue when I was so sorely in need of something scarey," she said. "It made everything so much more realistic."

Mr. Smith was greatly relieved. "It's mighty good of you to put it that way," he answered, "after I made such a — a beast of myself. Let's go out on the steps; somehow I feel that all these people are wondering if I'll do it again."

And so, during the interval before the ice-cream-and-cake part of the program, they stood together under the stars.

"To-night," said he, "has been the happiest of my life. I wonder," he added, thoughtfully, "if it is the custom in Louisville, Kentucky, for a girl to accept a fellow's company home from a church social?"

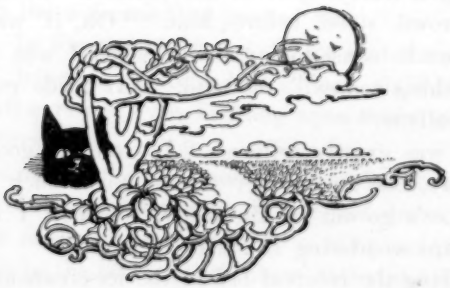
* * * * * * *

Beauty is not an inherent quality. But let the incandescent glow of sentiment shine upon a shoestring or a chromo, and then say, if thou darest, that it is not beautiful.

George Thompson had never thought upon these things, and George was puzzled. Why had Jack sat quietly in his chair for a full half hour, gazing contentedly at something he held in his hand? And what was the something? He had fondled it; had held it close to his eyes, had contemplated it dreamily at arm's length. And now, before the wondering gaze of George, he pressed it tenderly to his lips.

George was in bed, supposedly asleep; but cautiously, silently, he pushed back the covers, and leaning carefully forward, looked over his roommate's shoulder. In Jack's hand was something white. But George was more puzzled than ever.

For it was only a little strip of cardboard, with nine words printed neatly thereon.



The Belated Extra.*

BY W. T. WATERS, JR.

OTHING could have been more hideous than the series of mysterious murders down in Southend. The whole city was horrified to find the spotlight of the country turned unblinkingly on one of its own suburbs.

The fourth and latest murder had been the most atrocious of all. A steady young bookkeeper, head of a happy little household, was on his way home, Saturday evening, with his arms full of weak-end packages. Searchers found him late that night. The bundles were scattered about just as they had fallen. A cabbage lay unrolled from its wrappings. Some oranges had rolled out of a paper sack and lay scattered in the mud at the edge of the sidewalk.

The bookkeeper himself,— well, there were no evidences of robbery. There was the same lack of apparent motive that had characterized all the other killings of the past three months. The same devilish hand seemed to show in all of them.

The police were baffled. Such faint clews as they managed to unearth led them nowhere. The city was getting nervous. Men asked each other timorously where this thing would stop. Few were bold enough to walk the streets of Southend — or, for that matter, any other part of the city — after nightfall.

Haden, star man of the *News,* was on the story for his paper. For days he had not been seen about the office. Not a line of copy came from him. To his mates he himself had become a mystery.

Early on this particular afternoon he sat in whispering conference with Farnum, managing editor of the *News,* and Burke, the city editor, in the former's office.

"It's the biggest story of my life," Haden was saying. "I've tied every thread together, and there's no doubt on earth that I've located the fiend. Whatever you think about my yarn now,

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before the day's over you'll have to believe it. He's the man, and no mistake. I've hardly lost sight of him for three days. At three o'clock I meet Roswell. He's the deputy, you know. Then we go together and get the warrant, and after that there's nothing to do but serve it."

Farnum laughed nervously. "Just be careful, Haden."

"Roswell doesn't know where he's going, and has no way of knowing till I tell him. Nobody knows but you and I. I've promised Roswell all the credit if he keeps his head shut. Every hole is plugged. There just can't be a leak outside the office. If it's kept tight inside here, we'll wake them all up with the biggest story of the decade — facts, solution, all.

"I think it won't get out from here," Farnum opined, smiling with a show of satisfaction, and pointing to his locked desk. "In here's the type and the only proof that's been taken. The foreman of the composing-room himself set it last night, after everybody had gone. He wouldn't tell under torture. If you've got it sewed up outside, Haden, it's in a bag here. We'll stand by till you 'phone to let 'er go. Then she goes."

Haden stood up, looking at his watch.

"Fair enough, then. I'll have to get along. We've got to be prompt to the dot. He doesn't vary a second. Roswell and I will get out there and wait, and then while the fit is on him, while he's in his own trap with all the gruesome stuff around him, we'll get him."

"It's a ticklish business, and you don't want to get hurt," said Burke, shifting in his chair.

"Oh, I'm not fooling myself about that part of it," Haden answered, shaking his head and smiling. "I warned Roswell to come prepared for trouble. And he knows I never joke."

He opened the door and stepped across the threshold, lowering his voice though there was no one in sight in the corridor.

"When you hear 'let 'er go' from me, you can just send that extra sizzling out, for I won't say it unless everything is all right. So long."

With a nod and a smile he closed the door and was gone.

* * * * * * *

The regular city edition of the afternoon run was off the presses

and gone. The big machines in the bowels of the building were thundering forth the out-of-town edition. One of them was not working, however. Its crew had been ordered to "stand by," and they waited without knowing or caring the reason. The boss pressman himself had slipped the casts on the cylinder, and nobody else below knew they were there waiting for the press of a button that would send them racing into the extra which was to startle the country.

Burke, on the top floor, held his whole force of reporters together.

"Something's up, I'm thinking, and it's got the bosses scared, from the looks of things," said Hurdy, of the court-house run, to Fisk, the city hall man, as they sat together with their feet elevated upon a litter-strewn table. But no explanation was forthcoming, so they talked of other things.

Burke sat at his desk, apparently busy. His thoughts, however, were swirling through doubt and conjecture. Farnum, nervously pacing the floor of the local room, caught Burke's eye once in passing, but neither changed expression or spoke. The telephone rang time and again. At each ring Farnum and Burke thought their nerves would snap till the call was answered.

One of the rings came from Carson, the man on police. He wearily reported an ambulance call from "somewhere down south." He was told to rush what he could for the night edition, if the story turned up anything.

The wait went on and on. The blank meaningless strain began to worry the men. They tried to busy themselves at their desks with dub stories for the next day. The endless clatter of the telegraph keys at their gossip and the sporadic ringing of the telephones upon a flat silence grew irritating.

A shrill cry came up from the street below.

Burke leaped to his feet and rushed to a window, with Farnum beside him. A faint clamor of treble voices, growing in volume every second, was to be heard from the street below. Burke slammed the window open.

"Extra — a — a! Allerbout de — "

Carson burst into the room behind them.

"It's Haden," he groaned. "Oh, my Lord, he's gone! Here

it is." He thrust a flaring extra of the *Sentinel* under Burke's eyes. "It was that ambulance call. I had just landed the story when the boys caught me with this down on the street."

Every man in the office was standing, alert. Without a word they gathered around Carson and Burke, listening silently and tensely to what Burke read aloud:

MURDER FIEND IN SOUTHEND GETS TWO MORE

Deputy Sheriff and Newspaper Man His Latest Victims

Albert Haden of the *News* and Deputy Sheriff Roswell found dying and dead behind "haunted" shack in fury-ridden district. Mystery piles on mystery. Police summoned by call from unknown source and respond with reserves and bloodhounds, finding Haden and Roswell in weeds behind abandoned house on Allen Road where son killed parents thirty years ago. Shack surrounded by officers. Besiegers under fire of murder fiend within walls. He cannot escape.

Then Burke's eye skipped to other lines of big type below these.

Haden, in delirium on hospital table, mutters "Let 'er go! Let 'er go!"

Farnum burst out of the group and disappeared through the door.

"Quick, the last mother's son of us!" commanded Burke. "Carson and Hurdy to the shack. Fisk to the hospital. Brady — "

He shot orders right and left, while the telephones rang madly and men vanished like magic. The presses were already rumbling and roaring angrily in their pit.

They were still hot and fuming from their mad race through extra after extra when, about midnight, Haden became aware that Farnum was standing beside his cot in the hospital. He regarded him steadily for several moments, to be sure that he was not seeing another of the phantasms that had been bothering him in his fevered dreams. Farnum was smiling.

"Did we make it?" Haden strained to make his question audible.

Farnum nodded. "They got him," he added.

Whereupon Haden closed his eyes again, and without further ado went back to sleep.

A Business Trousseau.*

BY MICHAEL WHITE.

IN all properly constructed business tales the beautiful young stenographer in the end naturally marries the senior partner, or the senior partner's hero son after a stormy scene with Father. But this story is an exception to both combinations. True, it has to do with a trim and well favored office girl, who, for purposes of romance, regretfully set her matrimonial aspiration no higher than upon a young man at a near-by desk. Perhaps it was because the principal officers of the firm were already provided for in that respect, probably she just liked the young man and that was all there was to it. In any case had it been otherwise this yarn would not have crept out of the San Francisco office of The Trans-Pacific Construction and Development Company, and in a kind of don't-tell-Jones-whatever-you-do manner into the ear of the present writer.

This much illuminated, kindly observe Thomas B. Richardson, General Manager of The Trans-Pacific Company, striding up and down his private office in quite a flurry of excitement. Closeted with him was Lessing, secretary of the company, dubiously regarding a cipher cable message just delivered.

"You see," Richardson wheeled upon Lessing, "Bradley repeats his message from Vladivostock — 'need urgent'."

"That's a fact," nodded Lessing. "But I don't know what's to be done. The *Fu Chang* sails at 3 P. M. sharp. It's now close on noon."

"You spoke to the captain about it?" questioned Richardson.

"He just wouldn't listen," replied Lessing. "Talked about Board of Trade rules, risk of discovery, heavy fine on ship, and all that sort of stuff. You see the *Fu Chang* is chartered to us

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under the British flag. I guess the captain is afraid he would be sent to the Tower of London and beheaded. Said he couldn't think of it without his consul's permission."

"Have you asked the consul?"

Lessing shrugged his shoulders.

"No, hardly considered it would be of any use."

"Well, you might try," advised Richardson. "Step over there now — it's only two blocks away — and see what can be done. Use the art of persuasion. By Golly! somebody has got to be persuaded so that we don't fail Bradley. Those darned Russian officials would be tickled to death in the palms of their hands if they could swoop down on the work before it's finished. We've been running that dock contract on mighty close time. From his cables I guess Bradley is surely in a fix, and doesn't want the other parties to find out through the ship's manifest. They could hold up the *Fu Chang* indefinitely on charges of improper lading. But something has got to be done, or it may mean a loss of a hundred and fifty thousand dollars. And our only chance is by the *Fu Chang*. Confound the cold feet of that old skipper."

Richardson had followed Lessing into the outer office, talking as he went. He paused to survey the rapid fire of the typewriter battery, and his eye fell upon Miss Harris and young Glover, the two parties of the first part to this story, with heads drawn together in earnest conversation. It related to a business detail of course — the question whether it would be possible to purchase a mink fur set beheld the night before in the show window of Frinck and Brownlow's dry-goods shop, from the joint savings of their salaries provided by The Trans-Pacific Company. Keen business men will observe the connection. Into Richardson's face swept a look of stern displeasure. He had noticed the situation before, and it now clearly threatened the stability of office discipline. He directed a severe gaze upon Miss Harris, which she, presently lifting her head, met with an expression of most beautiful innocence.

"Did you wish to speak to me, Mr. Richardson?" she asked, tendering no sign at all of a guilty conscience.

It was on the tip of Richardson's tongue to retort with a plainly emphatic statement of his view of the case, when an idea hopped

into his brain, causing him to change his note entirely. While his features relaxed into quite a pleasant aspect, a twinkle of sudden inward satisfaction shone through his glasses.

"Er — yes," he replied, as if mentally gathering up the ends of some plan. "I do. I wish to speak with you and Glover in my office. Leave what you are doing and come in right away."

After Richardson had told Glover to close the door behind them, he settled himself in his chair in a manner more suggestive of paternal interest than the cold business procedure he usually adopted. Presently he spoke, tapping the finger tips of both hands together.

"Now I want you two young people to be entirely frank with me. From what I have noticed I should say you were considerably interested in each other."

Glover glanced uneasily at Miss Harris, while a shade of color mounted to her cheeks.

"Exactly!" Richardson slightly inclined his head. "You need not express in words mutual feelings eminently satisfactory to this firm. As I remarked at the last meeting of our Board of Directors, affairs of this kind add a needful touch of romance to the prosaic routine of business enterprise. They should be encouraged. I am happy to say the Board agreed with my view, and unanimously consented to a new rule governing such situations. It is this. When the sentiments of a young office couple are so plainly marked as in your case, they are to be given the choice of an immediate marriage or resignation of their positions."

Glover and Miss Harris stared upon each other in mute bewilderment.

"I presume," went on Richardson, as if referring to a contract for steel girders, "you will accept our terms — an immediate marriage?"

Glover somehow managed to recover sufficiently from the shock to find a faltering vocal expression.

"Honestly, Mr. Richardson, we — that is, I —"

"You are attached to Miss Harris, are you not?" put in Richardson tersely.

"Yes — certainly."

"Well, why hesitate?"

"Why, the fact is — er — we considered my salary would hardly be sufficient yet for — "

Richardson held up a restraining hand.

"I am happy to say our Board of Directors has taken that factor into benevolent consideration. It is left to my discretion to promote the bridegroom immediately after marriage. This I shall be glad to do in your case."

Glover's cheerful surprise left him unable to utter a word.

"Further," went on Richardson, "the firm wishes to emphasize its approval of matrimony among its employees by providing the entire cost of the honeymoon."

"How perfectly lovely!" broke in Miss Harris with enthusiasm.

On her Richardson smiled in quite an approving way.

"I see you are prepared to fall in with our plans," he nodded. "And I guess you speak for Glover."

"Oh, yes, indeed! We don't know how to express our appreciation sufficiently."

"Good!" snapped Richardson. "Then we have it all settled. We can go right ahead with your marriage, and get it over in time for you to sail at 3 P. M. on our chartered ship, the *Fu Chang*, for Vladivostock. That will be your honeymoon."

"Honeymoon — at 3 P. M. for Vla — Vladivostock!" she gasped.

"Is there any reason why you should not?" asked Richardson.

There was, one of an important feminine nature.

"Why, Good Heavens!" she exclaimed. "I — I haven't made any preparation for — for clothes — er — my trousseau."

Again the light gleamed in Richardson's glasses, as one ready to overcome any obstacle.

"The firm will take entire charge of that," he replied. "Also the expense."

He thrust a pad and fountain pen on to the slide of his desk.

"Just sit down and make a list of the things you want. Be as generous as you wish to yourself — that is our new policy. When finished, I'll have it sent over to — "

"To Frinck and Brownlow's," she suggested with an inspiration.

"All right, that firm will do. I'll send along instructions to have the things packed and put on board the *Fu Chang* before she sails. You needn't worry at all about that. Order what you like — the longer your list the better will it please The Trans-Pacific Company."

Not every bride is given such a chance, and it must be said for Miss Harris that she rose admirably to the occasion. She sat down to compose the longest possible list. In the meantime Lessing returned, fuming over what he termed the asinine stupidity of British official business.

"Think of it," he complained in disgust. "I got to the consulate at seven minutes to twelve. There was some other fellow with the consul. He came out exactly on the stroke of noon, and I tried to get in. But not on your life. The clerk insisted that as the consulate was technically closed between the hours of twelve and one — in honor of the consul's lunch — never — it was quite out of the question — absolutely impossible to discuss a business matter with the consul a minute after twelve or a single instant before one. The rule had been strictly observed previously, therefore it must continue till the end of time."

"Never mind. Don't worry about it," returned Richardson. He took Lessing by the arm and led him aside, where they could talk without being overheard. "It's all right," he went on. "I've fixed it all up. I'm going to marry and then ship that pair of innocents on the *Fu Chang* by way of their honeymoon. She's now making out the list of the things she wants. You take her list over to Frinck and Brownlow's, and see her trunks packed. Catch on?"

A light of comprehension broke on Lessing's face.

"By Jinks! That's a great idea."

"Sure! But you must attend to the trousseau end, and see that the trunks are stowed away somewhere in the hold where she can't get at 'em on the trip. I'll cable Bradley about the trunks. Young Glover and the girl are all right in ordinary circumstances, but you can't trust any one on a honeymoon jaunt. Sure to forget with the lovey dovey entertainment going on. Then it would be all up with us. So it's best not to tell them anything about it. I guess we'll yet save Bradley."

When Miss Harris had finished her list, Lessing hurried away with it, and Richardson took the young couple in hand. He whirled them around in his automobile, first to obtain a license, then to hunt up a minister. After the ceremony there remained just time to send off hasty messages to friends before going on down to the *Fu Chang*. On the way Richardson stopped to insist upon Mrs. Glover purchasing a few extra necessary traveling articles in case of emergency, and landed the pair on the *Fu Chang* a few minutes before the hour set for departure.

"I'll cable Bradley," he said to young Glover on parting, "to make you an assistant manager over there. That will give you a chance to study up the foreign side of our business on the spot. Good-bye and good luck."

So the hawsers were cast off, the whistle of the *Fu Chang* gave forth a farewell blast, and that seaworthy freighter moved out into the stream bound for Vladivostock. Glover and his bride had now the first moment of time to realize their position.

"Isn't this awfully sudden?" she asked, standing at the rail and gazing shoreward with almost a frightened look. "We — we are actually married, Bert, and off to — to Siberia."

"Sure," he responded, slipping his arm around her waist. "That's all right, but I'll be hanged if I know why Richardson took such a desperate hand in it. It's all moonshine of course about the directors' benevolent interest in matrimony. That was Richardson under cover. Anyway we're here together, which is better than being separated."

"Yes," she agreed. "But to think of the free hand they gave me with my trousseau. I ordered, Oh, my! everything I could think of, including that set of mink, Bert."

"You did, aye! That was smart of you."

"But I wonder if it was included?" she questioned.

"Let's go and see," he suggested.

They went to their stateroom to discover the absence of the trunks. A steward was summoned, but he knew nothing concerning them, didn't even believe in the existence of the trunks, at least on the ship. That sent the perplexed couple in haste to the freight clerk. At first he feigned ignorance, but when shown the keys Richardson had given Mrs. Glover, he recollected

that Mr. Lessing had brought on board two or three trunks.

"Yes, now I remember," he explained. "Mr. Lessing said that as you would not need them on the trip to stow them away in the hold."

"Mr. Lessing said so!" she exclaimed. "Why, how ridiculous! I do need them of course."

"I'm sorry," replied the clerk, "but you'll have to wait until you get to Vladivostock. They are down under a pile of freight which came aboard at the last moment. If there's any kick going it must be passed on to Mr. Lessing."

"Well!" she ejaculated, and she put a wonderful lot of expression into that single word.

"I guess the whole firm's gone crazy," was Glover's summing up of the case.

One need not dilate upon how the young couple passed their time on the *Fu Chang*. As it was clear they were sufficient company unto themselves, the crew took heed of the fact and attended to their own affairs.

The *Fu Chang* was a pretty slow vessel, but Vladivostock was in due course reached. Russian port officers were the first to climb over the side, but they were quickly followed by Bradley in charge of The Trans-Pacific Company's work. He greeted the Glovers in a cordial spirit, said he had planned for them to stay at his bungalow, and that he would attend personally to the clearing of their baggage. In fact it seemed to Mrs. Glover that Bradley was considerably more interested in her baggage than in herself, a point which she took note of subsequently. When, therefore, her trunks were brought on deck, Bradley asked for the keys, and went to talk with a uniformed and heavily whiskered individual, whom he addressed in the most flattering terms as Colonel Paulofski. A few stray sentences reached Mrs. Glover's ears.

"Bride, yes — Married just before leaving San Francisco — Daughter of prominent American citizen — You will understand, my dear Colonel, delicacy of feeling over opening her trunks — Merely trousseau — American women a bit sensitive — Warmest thanks. Permit me the pleasure of introducing you to Mrs. Glover."

The Colonel waved his hand as a sign to pass the trunks, plumed

his whiskers on making a low bow before the bride, and proceeded to converse fluently in a mixture of English, French, and Russian. Meantime Bradley had the trunks whisked over the side into a *sampan,* and bade the Glovers accept an invitation, tendered by himself, to come ashore later in the Colonel's launch, as it would be so much more comfortable. He was gone with the trunks in the *sampan* while the Colonel was still bowing out compliments, for brides were rare in Vladivostock.

It was a couple of hours later before the Glovers reached Bradley's bungalow, to find a room prepared for their comfort, which meant a great deal in Vladivostock. At last the trunks were in Mrs. Glover's possession. On opening them everything she had ordered on the list was disclosed, even to the coveted mink set. But — but there seemed to have been much waste space in the trunks filled with a rather curious assortment of packing. Also the first sheet of a Vladivostock paper which from its date could not have been in the possession of Frink and Brownlow when the trunks were purchased. She said nothing of this discovery at the time, but when on familiar terms with Bradley she produced the paper. He looked at it and laughed.

"You want an explanation, I suppose," he said. "Well, since the danger is now over you shall have it. We had a fire on the dock and all our nitro-gelatine tubes with fulminate of mercury caps exploded. I guess some of the Colonel's friends had a hand in it to squeeze us in renewing our contract, because not another tube could be had on this side of the Pacific, and we needed them badly to continue blasting work. I cabled Richardson for an immediate supply. But it is entirely against the Board of Trade rules to ship high explosives without special entry. That would have caused delay in San Francisco, and further delay here. It was just what the Colonel's friends wanted and we did not. So Richardson grasped the idea of shipping the stuff."

"In my trousseau," put in Mrs. Glover.

"Precisely. Enough to blow up the best part of Vladivostock. That was the only way Richardson could get it through, as the *Fu Chang's* captain had refused to have anything to do with explosives. But in order to conceal the stuff in your trousseau,

you had first to be married. It was a bright idea on the part of Richardson. You see how it was?"

"I see," she nodded. "But, oh! if I had only known the risk, it would have been a Russian sable set and not mink left charged to the account of The Trans-Pacific Company."

"And I honestly believe yours was the one case in which they would have gladly paid it," Bradley answered. "You helped us out of a bad fix by consenting to be married. But anyway Glover won the double benefit of yourself and promotion in consequence, and that is something."

"You mean everything," she added. "For both of us."

Aunt Mandy's Mating.*

BY CATHERINE RHODES DAVIS.

EACH recurring Monday morning brings to the busy housewife the same routine of duties, gathering up the laundry, ordering groceries, and clearing away the disorder from Sunday's free-and-easy life and general take-no-thought-of-the-morrow policy; so that, even though it may not be wash-day for milady, it is, nevertheless, a very busy morning.

For many years, I have looked forward to its coming with interest and pleasure, because, with it, there also came Aunt Mandy's smiling face,— Aunt Mandy, turbaned and broadsided, her white teeth always gleaming, and her own good nature fairly beaming forth from her dusky face,— Aunt Mandy whose proud boast had ever been that "nobody in ten states could wash and iron for the white folks like old Mandy."

"Howdy, honey," she said on one particular Monday. "How you does dis mawnin'? Feelin' good? Dat's fine! Dat's de way I laks to fin' yo'. No'm, I ain't so pyert, myse'f. Dat good-fer-nothin' Lize-Jane, she done had de cholry-marvels all night, an' kep' me up awaitin' on her till I'se mos' tuckered out dis mawnin'.

"Dat's a offul purty way yo' got o' fixin' yo' hair up, chile. Hit makes yo' look *so indifferent.*"

"Yes," I replied; "I'm glad you like it. Did you go to church last night?"

"Ya-as, honey, an' we *sho'* did have a fine discohse, a *fine discohse,* honey! Brer Abram, he's a mighty smaht niggah."

"What was his text, do you remember?"

"He's sich a pohtable man, honey. When he riz up dar in de sanctimony, wid his long black princess coat, I sez to myse'f:

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'He sho' is a han'some niggah.' Ya-as'm, I 'membahs de tex'. He sez: 'Deahly beloveds, my tex', it am a easy un. It am one yo' can all 'membah, an' hit's one I wants yo' all to live by. Hit am dis: "Be hones', an' fraud no man." Chile, dat niggah sho' did preach frum dat tex'. I disremembers now jes' where yo'll fin' hit in de Book; but he sho' did tell dem niggahs 'bout dey se'ves. He cum along home side o' me, an' he went to tellin' me 'bout how mizable a life he wuz a leadin' since Mis' Abram, she done went an' died from assumption uv de lungs. I tole him go 'long off wid his lonesomeness, I ain't bothered 'bout hit," and her broadsides shook with laughter at the recollection.

Presently, she proceeded: "You is a Christian, ain't yo', honey?"

To which I replied: "Yes, I *try* to be, Aunt Mandy; but why do you ask?" I was hardly prepared for her answer.

"I knowed hit, honey. You' 'pearance insured to me dat you wuz."

The next Monday brought her, turbaned and smiling, with her usual Monday morning salutation: "Howdy, honey; how yo' does dis mawnin'?"

"Quite well, thank you, and how are you? Did you go to church last evening?"

"Honey, I'se feelin' like de mawnin' stah! I sho' did go to meetin', chile, an' Mist' Abram, he axed my comp'ny home ag'in." Here followed a broadside of laughter.

"Dat fool niggah, he say it ain't good fo' man to be 'lone. He done been a teilin' me kyant nobody cook lak me. He say he want er git me to reside ovah his table an' make his life a blossomin' pergolory an' be his seamster, too."

"But I thought you said, when I helped you get a divorce after Uncle Davy ran off with that yellow girl, that you never, *never would* marry again."

"Honey," she said, and there was conviction in her tones, "honey, you ain't been long married yo'se'f. Is you done fo'got how dese here men kin 'suade an' 'su-u-ade? Dey des'suades an' 'suades tell a po' weak-minded 'oman ain't got no min' at all."

"And are you really going to marry him when his wife hasn't been dead a year?"

"Chile, Sis' Abram's deader'n a nit! She's dead ez she'll *ever be!* 'Tain't no use'n me lettin' dis chance slip by. Too many young niggahs respire to be his wife. Too many yaller girls traypesin' roun' after Brer Abram, chile. De Book, hit say 'a bird in han' 's wuf a hund'ed in a cage.' An' hit say to 'strike when de i'un's hot.' I 'low I better not take no chances on dat pohtable preacher niggah. He might make anuther indecision." Here, she proceeded to unwrap a stamped envelope and a large sheet of foolscap paper.

"I fotch dis here envellup an' dis paper fo' you to write me a letter, honey, an' I wants yo' to do you' best. He's a edjicated niggah, chile."

I sat down at the kitchen table to play amanuensis, and she dictated as follows:

"Deah Reve'nd Abram:

"De hours am slow an' weary sense yo' done went away. Your honeyful words been buzzin' in my yeahs. I been 'flectin' on you' pohtable 'pearance, an' yo' condescendin' offer to encumber me wid yo'se'f. It am a sho'ly fine offer. I ain't findin' it in my heart to infuse you; so I seat myse'f, an' takes my pen in hand, to write you dese few lines to let you know I will except yo' offer.

"I'se been a mournin' fo' you' presence jes laik a little mou'nin' dove, mournin' fo' hits mate."

After a pause, she added: "Dat's insufficient."

"How shall I close it? Shall I say, 'Yours sincerely,' 'Your sincere friend,' or what?"

Aunt Mandy looked up beseechingly. "Honey," she said, "couldn't you make hit a *little mo'* lovin'? S'posin' you said, 'Frum you' own true love, Mis' Mandy Carter?'" So the letter was concluded with a grand flourish and sent on its winged way.

The following Monday morning, Aunt Mandy was more smiling than usual, carrying a large bundle, which she proudly unwrapped to display a roll of cashmere of most vivid peacock blue, and some wide butter-colored lace.

"You 'members dat correspondence you writ fo' me? Dis am de upshot o' dat debblemint, honey. Mist' Abram, he done went an' bought dis here paycock blue ca'fsmere and dis cream lace fo' to emnify me fo' de weddin'. An' dis here musquiter-bar — I

'low to make de veil outen hit. I wants you to fix dat, honey; you is sich a good seemster.

"An' my gal, Pearline, an' his gal, Rubifoam, dey's gwine to be de flower-gals, an' my tother gal, Exsy, she gwine be maid of honoh, an' his boy, Troub, he gwine be des' groomsman."

"Exsy," I remarked, "I don't believe I ever heard that name before."

"Yassum, hit's a awful nice long name. Dat ain' all of it. Her full name is Eczema. We des say Exsy fo' short. All my chilluns got quality names. My baby gal, we calls her Angy for short; but her full name is Angina Pectoris. Dat name come outen a medicine book. Now dat boy, Troub, dat ain't *his* name neither. Mist' Abram, he says dah boy's name's Agamemnon; but, when he's little, he be so pesterin' bad, allus an' fo'ever into trouble, dat dey des tuck to callin' him Trouble, till dey des say Troub fo' short. Honey, is yo' heerd 'bout po' old Mis' Davis?"

"No," I answered. "Why? What about her?"

"Honey, dat po' ole soul been layin' dar daid almos' fo' a week, an' dey tells me dem doctors jes' been keepin' her alive on dem dare objects — dis nuffin else, Miss Sue. She sho' is lowered herse'f in my 'stemation doin' her ma like dat. But I got ter be moseyin' on. You gwine show me 'bout dat weddin' gown, ain't you, honey?"

Of course, I gladly gave suggestions as to the making of it, and, with my own hands, arranged the mosquito-bar bridal veil. I contributed a wreath of white flowers from an old summer hat, another of her admirers among the "quality white folks" contributed a fan, and she and the Reverend Mr. Abram jointly gave an antenuptial "festible," the proceeds from which went to buy the bride's gloves, and shoes of the loudest shade of tan, and a new celluloid collar and a purple tie for the bridegroom. A number of "white folks" were invited to witness the marriage, which was solemnized in due style in the "Fust Baptist Chu'ch" in Stringtown.

Seated in one corner, roped off for them by broad streamers of white domestic, the white people awaited impatiently, but decorously, the arrival of the bridal party. Not one of them would have shown by so much as a twitching of the lips their amusement at the crude attempts to mimic "white folks" that were everywhere in

evidence. A huge wedding-bell covered with lint cotton was suspended over the altar. The Easter motto, "Christ the Lord is Risen," shone resplendent in green and silver on the wall behind it. "Nigger heads" and field daisies, sunflowers and four-o'clocks, wild ferns and bachelor-buttons, glowed in lavish profusion about the altar.

When the house was filled, there was a stir at the door, which announced the arrival of the bridal party. Woolly heads wagged back and forth as a tall mulatto girl, who carried herself as the queen of Sheba might have done, swooped down the aisle, carrying a large music-roll. She was dressed in white, with flowing pink ribbons and black suède slippers, with a profusion of "set rings" and heavy bracelets and numerous combs set with brilliants. Proudly, she led the way to the altar, when, with many flourishes and adjustings of her skirts and gold-rimmed glasses, she finally seated herself at the wheezy little organ and began to sing: "I loves you tru—ly."

Pearline, than whom no blacker little imp ever trod the earth, and Rubifoam, only a shade less black, came cautiously down the aisle. Pearline wore a pink dress, pink half-hose, and a huge pink bow on her hair, which stood out stiffly over her head. The patent-leather pumps, as well as the pink dress and hose, had belonged formerly to my own little daughter, while Rubifoam was resplendent in a dress of pale yellow crêpe de chine, which had once been a party dress for one of Aunt Mandy's "young ladies." The yellow hose and huge yellow butterfly bow were quite as grotesque on her as the pink finery on Pearline, but they were happily oblivious of everything save the important part they were playing at "Ma and Pa's weddin'," and, with astonishing ease and grace, they scattered roses and nasturtiums, sweet peas and phlox, before the bride, who came leaning fondly on the arm of "dat pohtable preacher niggah."

"Miss Exsy," fearfully and wonderfully arrayed in a dress of Nile green, with pink sash and lavender sleeve bows, tan slippers and coral beads, a wreath of sunflowers on her hair and a shower bouquet of yellow cannas, brought up the rear, with Troub, awkward and embarrassed, but grinning widely, at her side.

"Millenium Dawn," some one behind me whispered, "the lion and the lamb."

The minister met them at the altar, shook hands with both, whereupon they exchanged positions so that the couple faced the congregation while the minister stood with his back to it.

"We'll now sing 'On Jordan's Stormy Banks I Stand.' Let everybody sing."

"How appropriate!" my husband whispered.

When that song had been sung as only a churchful of negroes could sing it, the minister offered "a word of prayer," which began with creation and rambled on down through the ages and off into eternity, but which said never a word about the two voyagers about to embark on the barque, matrimony, a frail one enough in which to try to battle Jordan's stormy waters. At its conclusion, he announced: "We'll now sing dat fav'rite ole hymn, 'One mo' mourner done cum, ain't you glad?'"

Only those who have heard negroes sing their own hymns know what melody they can bring from a seemingly meaningless jargon of words. Though perhaps not the most appropriate for a marriage song, the little church fairly trembled with the volume of it as every member present sang his best and loudest.

At the conclusion of this hymn, in a very solemn and pompous manner, the minister spoke the words that gained for Aunt Mandy her heart's wish, the coveted title of "Mist' Abram's wife."

"An' now, in seclusion," he proceeded, "we'll sing 'Praise God frum which all blessin's flow,' after which we'll all s'lute de bride."

To every one's amazement, after a whisper passed along down the line of the bridal party, Aunt Mandy took her "preacher nigger" by the arm and walked briskly down the aisle, followed by the flower-girls, the maid of honor, and "best groomsman." They scrambled hastily into Aunt Mandy's wagon, and drove rapidly away.

When she came for the laundry the next morning, she was fairly convulsed with laughter.

"Chile," she said, "you hyeerd dat niggah say 'S'lute de bride?' You seed dat bride take dat pohtable preacher out dah doah? Honey, I des does *love* an' adoah dat niggah; but he not

gwine s'lute *dis* bride 'fo' all dem white folks. No, sah! he do his salutin' at *home*.

"Look a-yonder, honey! See dem clouds? 'Never you see de sky a diagrainmin' an' de clouds a havin' convulshuns, you can sho' look out fo' *some* kin' uv weather. An' I got to be moseyin' on, kyase Mist' Abram, he done been tellin' me not to inspose myse'f. 'Fo' I goes, honey, I wants to ax you to order me a dime can o' constipated lye gin I fetches de close home. A cook? No, chile, I don't know *whar* you'd fine one. Dis yistiddy, dey wuz three white womans out our way astin' if we knowed any colored ladies what wants to cook. You see, honey, we'se all got *husban's* an' our husban's don' permit us to work. Well, good-by, honey, take keer o' yo'se'f."

The next Monday morning, Aunt Mandy was not turbaned and smiling, as usual, but bandaged and sullen.

"What's the matter?" I asked. "Have you and Brer Abram been in a fight?"

"You know dat triflin' yaller gal, Vashti? Dat'n what paints her ugly self an' wears specs? She say she *haf* to wear 'em kase of her vision of eyesight. She des apein' white folks. Don't need 'em no moah 'n I does! She been a tryin' to tole Mist' Abram 'way frum home. What'd I do? I done a *plenty*. I beat her to a frazzle an' tuck a broom an' knocked dat pohtable niggah down an' beat him up so good he been feelin' pohly ever since. He been 'havin' hese'f, too, honey. He sho'ly have! Dat triflin' Vashti, she went an' 'ported to de peace officer 'at we wuz a *fightin'* an' he cum an' tuck Mist' Abram to the lock-up. But I went down dar an' tole Mist' Jailer 'tu'n dat niggah loose, we ain't fighters! He never spoke a cross word to me in all his life.' I tole him dat we wuz dere at home, tendin' to our own business, peaceablelaik, 'n' here dey comes, tryin' to infuse us into a 'greement. I sez, sez I, pintedly: 'They wa'n't a thing the matter more'n me an' Mist' Abram's guilty uv a little innocent love. He sho' *is* a *good conditioned* man! Ain't you gwine to turn him loose, boss?'

"Honey, dat white man laff so he laik to bust hese'f; but he sho' did turn dat niggah loose. Dat Vashti, she been *goin' on* too. Honey, don' you never let nobody run over you, none o' dese photographer-womens what works on writin'-machines 'n' nobody!

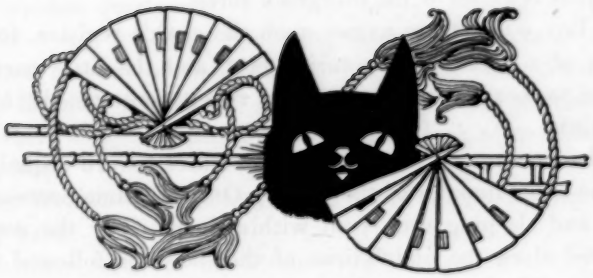
You *stan' up fo' yo'se'f,* honey—yo' man'll like yo' *heap* better, chile; I des does love an' adoah dat niggah."

The "honk honk" of an auto sounded up the street. Aunt Mandy picked up her ears.

"Ain't dat one of dem fool auto-mob-illy machines?"

I nodded affirmatively.

"Dey sho' is crazy fool-things. Des now, I wuz a comin' 'long peaceable, holdin' my umbrel kyase 'twuz rainin', an' a white man had to holler at me: 'Put down your parasol, Aunty; you'll make it jump de track,' an' dere I had to stan' in de rain tell it passed. Wouldn't have one of de crazy things. Nothin' but a kerosene can, lit on both ends, nohow. Look at dat niggah—drivin' off widout insultin' me 'bout it! I'll bust his haid. I loves an' adoahs him, but he *sho' got to mind,"* and away she went to "speak her mind" to Brer Abram.



The Point of View of the Little-Old-Mother.*

BY MARY A. P. STANSBURY.

HE launch from the mainland touching at the island harbor of "Good Rest" landed three passengers, the Boy, the Girl, and the Little-Old-Mother. The few idlers on the veranda of the rustic inn watched them as they came slowly up the winding path between the pines, — the Boy giving his strong, young arm to the elder woman with a protective tenderness. Her pale face, marked with patient lines, was redeemed from commonness by some remarkable quality of her eyes. Large, dark and almost unnaturally brilliant, they seemed not to look, but to be looked through by something so vividly alive as to be independent of physical organism. Contour and color were repeated in those of the Girl who walked slim and straight beside her, but the clearness of the younger orbs was veiled by a shy wonder as of one whose gaze dwelt for the first time upon the mysterious beauties of the evergreen forest.

The Boy wrote three names upon the clerk's register, followed by that of a great manufacturing city, and the little party was assigned to inexpensive quarters in a rudely constructed "annex" of the inn.

As the days passed they made no overtures toward acquaintance with the other inmates of the house. Only the time necessary for eating and sleeping was spent within doors. For the rest they wandered along the undulations of the shore, or followed the allurement of the lovely woodland paths through dim mazes of greenness and shadow.

When the steps of the Little-Old-Mother faltered, as was often, the Boy and Girl heaped balsam-pillows at the foot of some tree whose hospitable roots were twisted to the semblance of rustic seat or couch, and made her comfortable there.

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"Go away now and play!" she would entreat, smiling up at them through the wonderful eyes.

"But you'll be lonesome."

"Lonesome? Silly children! With the pines whispering and the birds singing!"

"And you're so much better, Mother?" The Girl's voice was soft as a caress.

"So much, dear!"

"And it's all Boy's doing, isn't it?"

"Yes, — dear Boy!"

"Girlie!" The Boy would blush over all his handsome face. "Stop jollying a fellow! Kiss Mother and come!"

Then the two would go away together, turning now and again to wave a hand. But when they were quite out of sight, the Little-Old-Mother's smile would fade, the large eyes close, and a great stillness settle upon the worn features.

Walking through "Lover's Path" one morning, with the oaks and pines marching alongside up the slope, and, here and there, a silver birch peering ghostly through the gloom, the Woman-Whom-Everybody-Trusted came upon the Girl sitting alone upon a mossy bank. Surprise at so unusual a happening spoke unconsciously in her face. With a charming blush the Girl answered the unspoken question.

"He — my friend" — pointing through the trees to a canoe, anchored midway of the little bay — "is out there fishing. He wants to catch a bass for Mother. One of the gentlemen told him where to go. When I came back to look after Mother, she was asleep."

The Woman-Whom-Everybody-Trusted glanced down at the mossy bank.

"Is there room for me beside you?"

"Oh, yes!" The Girl spoke with eager pleasure. "Do sit down. I'd love to have you."

"I have a confession to make. At first I fancied him your brother, although you are not at all alike. But I spied upon the register. And then, one day at dinner, I noticed this."

The Girl's left hand lay on her lap. The small forefinger was roughened with needle-pricks, and, on the third finger,

there sparkled a slender ring set with a single diamond.

"Such a pretty one!"

"Do you think so?" The Girl's voice thrilled with delight — "It is a little stone, but it's real — and white — and there are such lovely lights in it! See!" She held it up to a beam of sunlight flickering through the green leaves above. "Would it be bold of me to tell you about it?"

"It would be very sweet of you to tell me."

"I truly suppose that I ought not to have it at all. But he began to save up for it three years ago, when I was only fifteen. He had a little china bank that his mother had given him. She died when he was only six. He kept it on a shelf in his room and put all his nickels in it. Sometimes, when they didn't come fast enough, he would have a quarter or a half changed to nickels. Of course he hadn't spoken to me yet — we were both too young. I said to him afterwards — just teasing, you know — 'You must have been awfully sure of me! What would you have done if I had said no? Give it to some other girl?' But he said, 'There never was and never could be any one in all the world for either of us but the other.' I guess that's true.

"He is so good to my mother. She took cold last winter and has never quite got over the cough. When he said he was going to bring us up here, we almost laughed at him. But he said, 'Didn't I get a raise at New Year's? There's nothing like the air of the pine woods to cure a cough. I've told the boss all about it and he's given me ten days off. So there's nothing for you to do, Girlie, but pack the grips!' In the end he had his way. He always gets it because — "

"Because his way is the right one?"

"That's just it! He's only five years older than I am, but he knows ten times as much and is a hundred times as good. We've been here just a week and Mother seems so rested and well already. You see, she was a country girl so it's like coming home for her. But it's all new to me. I've hardly seen trees before except in the parks. I never dreamed that the world could be so beautiful. Oh! there's going to be such a lot to remember!"

"And lovely remembered things are yours to keep always."

The Girl smiled brightly.

"How strange! You talk just as he does. 'A dress or a hat or a coat,' he says, 'wears out and is gone, but a memory lasts forever. So how can we be wasting money when we change it into memories?' Doesn't that sound beautiful — just like a book?

"And to think that there are three more long, lovely days, and every minute of them worth more than gold!"

But there were not three days, or even one!

Nobody knew just what happened. Some children playing near the Ledge saw the Girl fall from the rocky shelf and the Boy leap after her. They ran screaming for aid, but when it came there was no longer need of it. O Girl and Boy!

There was no lack of sympathy and helpfulness. The Little-Old-Mother had become all at once a figure august as Niobe. Purses flew wide open, and the gay summer people, who had given no thought to the lovers living, wept above them dead.

Only the Little-Old-Mother shed no tears.

The Woman-Whom-Everybody-Trusted found her sitting beside the two beautiful bodies in the room where, for the first and last time, they lay in state. The Boy's face had grown older, nobler, as with the promise of manhood fulfilled, and on the Girl's lips, — "the sweet, thin lips that had secrets to tell, —" played the lovely phantom of a smile.

The Little-Old-Mother was quite still except for gently patting the small, cold hand that wore the ring.

"I haven't taken it off," she said. "She wouldn't like it. I was just going to cover it." As she spoke she laid the waxen right hand across the left, and the little star-like gem with all its twinkling lights passed into perpetual eclipse.

A dry sob tore the throat of the Woman-Whom-Everybody-Trusted.

"O, my dear!" she cried. "Don't! Don't hold yourself so! Cry! Cry! It will do you good!" She threw her arms about the other's thin shoulders.

"You don't understand!" said the Little-Old-Mother. "I'm not holding myself back at all. I don't *want* to cry. I'm — I'm *glad!*"

Looking into the kind face bending over her, she saw no

sign of revulsion there, — only a very tender questioning.

"I can't explain it without telling you something about myself. The story won't be long, though it took a good while to live it through.

"I was married when I was just a little older than my girl. My George was just such another as he" — she touched a curl of the Boy's hair, — "strong, and kind, and loving, with always a laugh and a good word. He had a bit of money in the bank and a steady place in the factory, and not a single bad or wasteful habit. I was brought up to work and save, and we furnished up a little home, and I was happy as a bird all day long, keeping it shining clean and cooking the things he liked against he came at night. He'd off with his jacket and help me wash the dishes, and then, if the evening was fine, we'd go for a walk, or if 'twas stormy, he'd read to me out loud while I sewed. He'd had more schooling than I and was a grand reader and made me understand better than if I was reading for myself. Those were happy days.

"All at once times began to change. There was a panic on Wall Street, they said. I didn't rightly know what that meant, but the factories, one by one, commenced running on half-time and some of them shut down altogether. The foreman in our mill liked George and kept him on as long as he could, but the day came when he was laid off with the last of the other men. Day after day he tramped the streets looking for work, getting only an odd job now and then. It was the beginning of winter when my boy was born. Our little money in the bank was used up and we had to move to get cheaper rent. I was slow getting my strength back, the baby was sickly, and we got in debt, first for medicine, and after a while for food and coal. In the spring the baby died.

"Times began to pick up a little, and George got a job in a foundry. It was hard, dangerous work, but he was more than thankful for it. We did our very best, but there were always the old debts and the extras for sickness, and we never could get even. Worst of all I could see that his health began to break. He would never complain, but he lost all his old, bright ways. He wasn't cross like some men, but he was silent. He'd come home at night dead tired and half dizzy from the heat of the

furnace-fires, swallow his bit of supper with scarce a word, throw himself down on the bed and fall into a heavy sleep. I'll never forget how I said to him once, 'George, do you know how long it is since you've called me sweetheart?' He looked up at me and there was a sort of horror in his face, and he said, 'God help us, Maggie! I'm too tired even to love *you!*'

"He had worked five years in the foundry, when the iron-makers' union ordered out their men, and he had to go with the rest. The men lost out at last, though it was three months before the strike was settled.

"Our second boy was a lovely baby with yellow curls and blue eyes, the image of his father. The summer he was three was hot and sickly. The doctor said, when he fell ill, that nothing but country air would save him. But we had no money to go with. When he died we had to go in debt for the coffin.

"George gave up then — I saw it. It was the beginning of the end. When the heart's out of a man, head and hands can't keep on much longer.

"I don't pretend to understand. I don't hate people because they are rich. I wouldn't take away a penny from them that have more than I. I don't hold with bombs, or dynamite, or strikes, or beating up folks that don't belong to the union. But there's something wrong somewhere when a man like my George, good, honest, sober, anxious to work, hasn't a chance to support his family and give his babies the food and air that they can live on, and dies himself, old and worn out before his time. It won't be so always. There's a better day coming sometime. If I weren't so sure of that I couldn't believe in God.

"Ellen was a year-old baby when George went. I managed somehow. I won't talk about that, — it's all over and gone. All her life long she's been my strength and comfort and blessing.

"When he" — she pointed to the quiet figure of the Boy — began to come around and I saw how it was to be with them, it seemed as if I couldn't bear it. It wasn't that I didn't love him, for he crept into my heart like he'd been my own that I lost, nor yet that I was jealous and grudged her to him. No, No! But I was afraid! Suppose my life and her father's should be lived over in them! And what was there to hinder now more than

then? But I couldn't speak out, I didn't dare. If there's anything in all this world that a woman has a right to, it's love. No matter what the risks are or where it's going to end.

"But now — *she's had all the best things and she never can lose any of them.* She's been young, they loved each other, and he died for her!

"All the best but one!" The Little-Old-Mother's voice was very low. "The feel of baby-fingers on her breast! But even that, though she couldn't know it, — wifehood, motherhood, everything, — were all bound up in love. Don't you remember how the scent of the wild rose bud is almost as sweet as that of the flower?

"Now you know why I am glad!"

"Youth, hope, love, supreme sacrifice!" murmured the Woman-Whom-Everybody-Trusted under her breath. But aloud she said, for she could not keep back the words:

"But you! What will you do?"

"I? That is my secret, but I don't mind telling you. I have such a very little while to wait. The doctor gives me only till the leaves fall. I never could take courage to tell her, and now, thank God! she'll never know till —"

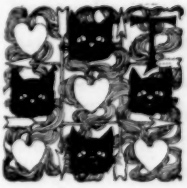
"Till when?"

The Little-Old-Mother's face was transfigured, glorious.

"Till I surprise her!" she said.

The Triple Expense.*

BY GEORGE JEAN NATHAN.



THERE were three of us and only one of her. That was the trouble. We were all in love with her and she admitted she liked each of us equally well. That bothered each of us — equally. Jim wanted to marry her. So did Tom. So did I. She couldn't make up her mind which of us she would take. It was the old eternal triangle gone one better, and take my word for it there were more angles to our quadrangular predicament than the geometrical definition allowed.

One of these angles — or rather three of them, and they were all acute — was our general and individual financial condition. Jim was broke most of the time; Tom was broke more of the time; and I was broke all of the time. She made twelve dollars a week typewriting. As for us, to be exact, when I say we were broke, I mean our three incomes added together wouldn't have supported one of us married to her plus her own twelve dollars. So you can see what a tough proposition Love was up against when it tackled us.

Jim worked in a bank and what of his small salary he didn't spend on orchids for her went into expensive socks and cheap food for himself. And half a dozen orchids once a week, a pair of silk socks once a week, and enough food to sustain life on the other days, regularly made Jim's pocketbook look like the surf in Atlantic City on a very rainy Tuesday. There was nothing in it.

Tom had a job as the secretary of a politician who was widely known for his gifts to charitable institutions and his general liberality. He gave Tom a salary so handsome that, as the politician himself expressed it once when Tom asked for a raise, "some whole families could live on it." And when Tom had dared reply in return that *he* had to support a bathtub and was therefore handi-

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capped to a greater extent than some of the whole families his boss referred to, the latter was so wrathy that Tom was glad when he was privileged to retain his job. In other words, Tom was brainy, ambitious, good looking, had had a fine college education and was making — or taking, which is the same thing,— twenty dollars a week.

I? Oh, I wrote pieces for the newspapers and usually owed everything I was going to make week after next, week before last.

I won't tell you just how we happened to meet Hilda — it's a pretty name, isn't it? Let it go that we met her, we saw and she conquered. Before we ran across her, Jim had said he'd never marry anybody; Tom had said he'd marry an heiress if he ever did marry; and I had said I didn't believe I could ever fall in love with a girl who worked for a living. I wasn't a snob; I was just romantic.

Ah, but Hilda! She was different. She was the only girl we'd liked to have seen across the breakfast table for the rest of our lives and with whom we'd never, never, never be disillusioned even if we *knew* she had a hole in the toe of her stocking. (And let me tell you, you broadminded skeptic, if you think that's a trivial sort of thing when it comes to denting a romance, you've got another guess coming.) She was a wonder, yes, sir, a wonder. She never complained of anything; she never told us about any other fellow who was or had been crazy about her; and she never ordered caviar when we chipped in and asked her out to dinner on Saturday nights. I simply can't describe her. She had nice soft hair, and her shirt-waist blended with her belt so exactly you couldn't figure out where they joined. And she had the nicest, softest voice — Gee, she had a nice voice! When she spoke your first name, you realized for the first time what a fine sound it had.

Although we knew and she knew, too, that none of us could support her even if she did say *yes*, Jim, Tom, and I proposed to her regularly — Jim on Tuesday nights, Tom on Thursday nights and I was on the job on Sundays. And after each proposal, she'd look at each of us with a sad, sweet little smile and say: "But what about — and — (the two angles who weren't present)? You know I love you all."

Well, things had been going along like that for six months and

although we fellows and Hilda held a lot of consultations and tried to solve Love's geometrical problem, we weren't any nearer a solution at the end than we had been the night after we had first met her. It was at one of our Saturday evening co-operative dinners that Jim, Tom, and I finally bucked up enough courage to ask Hilda to please decide on one of us. We looked on ourselves not as the Three Musketeers, but as the Three Muskeeters and two of us were unwillingly willing to be stung. The tension of waiting so long in hope had got on our nerves. Each of us hated the thought of losing her, but it now was simply a case of that or losing sleep and you can appreciate the fact that we hadn't slept much during those six love-filled months. And there had been thirty-one nights in four of 'em!

"But," said Hilda a bit shyly, "if I did decide on one of you, how could we live? Marriage means double expense and later on —" here she blushed divinely — "possibly triple. And each of you has money troubles enough already."

Jim spoke up first.

"I'll surely get a better job in the bank soon," said he. "That'll lead the way to more coin and then it'll be easy sailing."

Hilda smiled — very sweetly.

Tom looked across at her with one of those I'd-give-a-million to-hug-you looks.

"Things are bound to strike the boss fairly soon," he said, "and I ought to get a good boost in salary."

Hilda smiled — very sweetly.

It was up to me. And, frankly, I was stumped. My total assets at the moment amounted to almost six dollars, and my prospects for the future included I. O. U's for seventy dollars, a year-old tailor bill for fifty, last month's board bill for forty, and the promise that if I didn't fall out of love soon and get back in the working harness again, I'd stand a good chance of losing the job I did have. But, as I have remarked, it was up to me.

"I have brilliant prospects," said I, and my tone was so bold that it surprised me, much as a dollar bill tucked away in an old waistcoat surprises one when one finds it. I knew I had nerve somewhere and here it had turned up unexpectedly.

And Hilda smiled — very sweetly.

Silence, an embarrassing silence, followed. Hilda toyed with a salt-cellar; Jim lighted a cigarette that he didn't feel like smoking; Tom inclined his head far over toward the left, as if he really thought he saw some one he knew at the other end of the restaurant; and I, completely forgetting myself in the excitement, accidentally ordered four expensive cordials. I shall never forgive myself.

After a long time, during which the couple at the next table got into a violent argument as to the selection the orchestra was playing — she affirming that it was "I Pagliacci," and he insisting it was "My Cousin Carus" — Hilda, who had evidently been thinking hard all the time, turned toward us. She no longer smiled, but her face seemed more glorious than ever before in its seriousness. Very few women can look pretty and serious at the same time. That's the reason suffragettes are always so — but that's another matter. We waited for Hilda's words.

"I have been thinking it all over," she said finally, with just the suspicion of a dear little worried frown, "I've been thinking it all over, and I believe I have come upon the only solution."

Jim grinned complacently. He thought he was the solution. Tom tried amateurishly to hide his grin. He thought he was the solution. And, yes, I confess I had suspicions that I wasn't going to be the runner-up in this contest either. I knew Hilda and I had one thing in common — we were both romantic; and I had made up my mind she was going to say something about like this: "Yes, I've been thinking over everything, and although I like you, Jim, ever so much, and you, too, Tom, I believe Jack (that's me) and I could be happier together because of our mutual tastes." I was sure Hilda was going to say it.

What Hilda did say, however, was this: "I like each of you well enough to marry, but try as I may, I can't make a final decision on any one of you. So I'll tell you what I will do. One year from to-night we four will meet here. I won't allow any of you to see me in the meantime. But, at the end of the year, the one who has gone out into the world and achieved the most fame, that one shall I marry."

We were dumbfounded. Jim spoke up first. "Why, Hilda, that isn't fair. They do it in fairy stories and in novels,

but it isn't being done this year, you know. It's impossible."

Tom echoed Jim's opinion. I kept quiet. I knew the romantic side of the girl's nature.

Well, after an hour of protest, ridicule, and everything else, Hilda had her way, and the next day — like three men in a book — we asterisked ourselves from the life of our mutual sweetheart for one long, doubtful, love-torn, desperate year.

* * * * * * *

It was the same restaurant, the same table, the same waiter, the same orchestra, the same menu. Everything was the same, except the prices and Hilda. The prices were higher and Hilda was more beautiful. Not a word of what had passed in the year just gone by was mentioned until the dinner had faded away into finger-bowls. And, with the dipping of chocolate eclaired fingers, the silence of a year ago this very night, this very time, repeated itself. Hilda toyed with a salt-cellar; Jim lighted a cigarette that he didn't feel like smoking; Tom inclined his head far over toward the left, as if he really thought he saw some one he knew at the other end of the restaurant. There was only one thing different. I kept my head about me this time and didn't become emotionally extravagant — and good reason!

After the same long time, during which a new couple at the next table got into a violent argument as to the name of the piece the orchestra was playing — she affirming that it was something of Bach's, and he insisting it was anyway reminiscent of "Give My Regards to Broadway" — Hilda turned her glorious face toward us.

"Well, boys," she said, "tell me in turn just what fame each of you has won during the year and thus decide for me the name of my future husband." And she turned to Jim, who was sitting at her right, inviting him to speak first. Without much digression, Jim told his story.

"When we left you a year ago to-night, I made up my mind on the spot that I could never accomplish anything as a clerk in the bank, so I left my job on the following Saturday. Two weeks later, after a lot of hustling around, I got a job with a cotton

brokerage firm in Wall Street, and two months later I had worked myself into a position where I stood a good chance of succeeding the office manager some day. The office manager died from an operation for appendicitis three weeks later and I did get his job. My luck was with me and I played it hard. And now, my dear Hilda, to cut the story short, I am one of the figures in the cotton pit, one of the best known of the younger crowd in the Street, am going to form a firm of my own very shortly, and — and (here Jim paused, dramatically) I have a balance in the bank at present, the same bank in which I was a clerk a year ago, of exactly twenty-five thousand good, round, shining Goddesses of Liberality. Will you be my wife?"

Hilda smiled — very sweetly.

"Wait," she said, simply, and turned to Tom at her left. "What fame have you won?" she asked. And Tom began:

"With the incentive I had," he said, "I dug into the political game hard. I got into the good graces of the boss by turning a nice little trick with the paving contractors for him, and he began shoving me ahead in double-quick time. Through his influence, I became ward boss in my district, and that led on to close association with the Mayor. You know my boss and the Mayor are not relatives, but they *are* co-relatives. There simply can't be a mayor who isn't in with my boss * * * Well, to cut my story short, too, I now have the honor of being the youngest dock commissioner the city has ever had, and my salary, while not as much as Jim makes, is sufficient to enable me to ask you to be my wife. Will you?"

Hilda smiled — very sweetly.

"Wait," she said, simply, and looked across the table to me. "It's your turn, Jack," she said.

I had listened to the narrative of Jim and Tom and their fine luck with a good deal of uncomfortable interest, I admit, but I knew Hilda's nature so well. I knew she was romantic enough after all not to care about prosaic Wall Street, and even more prosaic politics. And I had planned my coup well. I paused a moment for proper effect. I felt sure of myself.

"Well?" said Hilda.

"Hilda," I said, "I was so unhappy away from you all this

time, and I thought of you so much that I wasn't able to do a thing. I have only my constant love to offer you." And I sat back in my chair to watch the effect of my master stroke. Out of the corner of my eye, I saw Jim's frown of surprised worry, Tom's lip being bitten a little nervously, and a little smile of happiness creep across Hilda's pretty mouth. No one spoke for a moment. I knew I had won the day — and Hilda.

"That's the sort of a man a woman loves," said Hilda, finally, with her radiant eyes on me. "A woman wants to be loved all the time, and wants that love to dominate ambition, work, money, everything. But, alas, money, ugly as it is, is absolutely essential in these extravagant times, and I have decided to marry — Jim.

And Hilda smiled — very sweetly.

* * * * * * *

Now, I know you think you see the moral of this story, about the money-greed of all modern women, the lack of romance in these days, and all that sort of thing, but you are wrong. For, two years after Jim and Hilda were married, Jim lost every cent he had in the world in a bucket-shop smash-up, lost his Wall Street prestige, lost his looks, hope, almost everything in the world it seemed. But Hilda stuck to him, kept on loving him just the same, and they are now living as happy as ever up in a dingy little twenty-dollar-a-month flat in Harlem with their year-and-a-half-old cute little curly-headed triple expense.

Risen Indeed.*

BY MARY MORRISON RAYNAL

"THE horns, Father, there are the horns!" A fragile vein-corded hand reached across an expanse of feather bed to clutch a time-rounded shoulder. The dawn was rent by that music, strange and stately, with which Moravian sleepers are awakened for their sunrise Easter service.

"Lie still, *liebling,* they are just starting out. It isn't three o'clock yet." Emil Van Fleck strove to quiet the quivering old wife at his side. Heedless of all save the music, she struggled up. Her faded blue eyes shone with the extinguished fire of youth. Exaltation was in her white face.

"Was ever Love Feast so blessed as that of yesterday, Father," she exulted. "Through the open window I could smell the narcissus in the Bishop's garden. When the young people brought in the buns I seemed to see you and me as we served on the day of our betrothal. And oh, the love, the love irradiating every face, the wondrous love of the Creator!"

Painfully, as she dressed herself in her shabby black, she wandered about the room, gazing in dazed fashion at its dearly familiar objects. Watching furtively, Emil felt rather than saw her lifting the lid of a heavy cedar chest. The fire that he had kindled failed to lighten the dull depths of the chest, but Emil needed no light to show him its contents. Each little time yellowed garment had left its impress upon his heart. A trembling fell upon him as his wife began to lay out the clothing of their long-dead child.

"I thought to have washed it fresh," she crooned, "but the weariness bore me down."

In her hand she held a tiny shirt: "He was so little, so little

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to leave his mother and go out alone into the darkness. I couldn't think of him in Heaven, he always seemed out there under his cold little stone. Sometimes as I sat alone I would sing the little songs to call him to me. And at night when the rain beat under the door, I could feel his poor little spirit hovering just outside."

The adoring little German woman should, logically, have borne a dozen children, and by this time have been a complacent grandmother. But after the fading away of her first forget-me-not-eyed baby the angel of birth had turned relentlessly away from the desolate little home. Stormily, as Hannah of old, though she had prayed, there was never again for her the weak flutter of the new drawn breath. Out of this mother love pent up in her heart had sprung the fancy that her child would arise on Easter morning.

So strong is the Easter spirit in the Moravian, so overpowering his belief in the resurrection of the saints, that grief for the dead gives place to a brave sweet rejoicing in the blessedness of those gone before. Flowers cover the graves on Easter morning, and the sunrise service recognizes only that death which is swallowed up in victory.

Long brooding over the child's arising a spiritual body had, in the aged mind of the mother, merged into the dream that the arising would be in warm human guise. The dream, at first, had been intermittent. Reason would assert itself, her face wearing the haunted look of one who, recognizing the creation of her brain as such, grieves over its futility. But as Easter drew near her dream obsessed her, she dwelt in her world of shadows.

Emil, in the beginning, had tried to dispel her illusion, but as it gained ascendancy he wavered. Because he, too, was very old and had always been dominated by her, he had come to a fearsome half belief in her vision. The time being now upon them his dread was as great as her joyful expectancy. That the child was to be given back to them in human form Emil did not for one instant grant, his loving heart breaking in anticipation of the cruelty of her disappointment. But once before he had stood, awe-strickened before the miracle of motherhood, and he could not now believe that this spirit travailing was all in vain. If the child was risen in glory, might not the heavens be opened for

the mother also? He lifted his soul to the Father all Merciful, but no peace came.

Sinking down before the fire in his split-bottom chair Emil's head drooped on his breast, his rugged, work-worn hands clutched his knees. So piteous was his despair that it recalled the wandering wits of his old wife. Crossing over to him with outstretched arms, like an angel of benediction, she gathered him to her bosom. As she patted him, stroked his scant locks, mothered him in her dear fashion, his tense face relaxed. The fire, roaring now, had dispelled the ghostly shadows of the room. Emil reached for his pipe.

His respite, however, was brief. The horns, faint, far-away, could again be heard. Having aroused the neighboring town they were now on their homeward way, traversing the quaint old town of Salem, that bit of Germany's Moravia which was transplanted to Carolina by the Count Zinzendorf.

It was almost time for the service now. With steps of slow stiffness on his part, tremulous uncertainty on hers, they went down the brick flagged street toward the stone church. The eerie light of unborn day gave a strangeness to the square. The elms, already in tender leafage, were a blur against the sky.

As they passed the Sisters' House several of the prim old women came out behind them: "Old Mrs. Van Fleck," they nudged each other, "how will she bear her disappointment?" Starved mother hearts beating under their guise of sanctified virginity, they sighed, openly wiping their eyes.

From the open doors of the Academy the young girls were streaming out, diffusing the warm glow of youth: "Old Mrs. Van Fleck," they whispered, pointing her out to each other with the brutal frankness of the young, and because the mother heart had not yet awakened under their fluffy blouses they giggled as they passed along the story of her illusion.

The open square in front of the church was rapidly filling. Determinedly the aged couple pushed their way to the very steps of the church, those winding stone steps that led up to the closed door. During the nerve-racking wait which followed Emil felt his wife swaying against him, only the strength of his supporting arm upholding her. The fickle spring of yesterday had fled.

Cold gusts of wind swept the square, chilling them to the marrow. Ever denser grew the crowd, ever deeper was the interest with which they watched the high closed door. In the half light the stone church raised itself with old world dignity. Each Easter for a century and a half such crowds had surged around it; countless human hearts, the joyous and the weary, awaiting the proclaiming of the risen Lord.

A stream of light shot across the threshold, in the doorway stood the Bishop, white robes silhouetted against the gloom, head raised majestically:

"The Lord is risen," he proclaimed.

"*The Lord is risen indeed!*"

The triumphant tones might have been those of the angel at the tomb, the light that from the cave of Arimathæa. Into old Mrs. Van Fleck's face flamed again that weird white exaltation as she joined the crowd in their halleluiah:

"Hail, all hail, victorious Lord and Saviour,
Thou hast burst the bonds of death!"

The singing having been followed by a part of the Easter Litany the horns broke forth anew. The procession turned toward the cemetery, one band of horns leading, the other, like a far-away echo sending back from behind the strange medieval music. Down the long avenue of century-old cedars the procession moved, voices hushed, the sound of trampling feet merging into the music of the horns.

In the cemetery, where, amid the grass, orderly rows of small white gravestones resting flat on the green spoke gently of the hosts of dead, the procession broke. The grayness of early dawn but half revealed the stone, crumbling, moss-grown, toward which Emil Van Fleck led his wife. It was in the boys' section of the cemetery, for death, which severs all family ties, separates Moravians in their last sleep. Wee girls, wee boys, young men, maidens, mothers, life-worn veterans, each lie in a company of their own kind.

Her eyes fixed on the stone with painful intensity, Mrs. Van Fleck leaned against Emil's shoulder panting heavily. The Bishop's voice, reading from the Litany, comforted her heart